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## OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES,—AN ANNOUNCEMENT.

BY THE EDITOR.

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In all work there should be progress. Lack of progress is failure. Many people imagine that, in their work, they are making progress, when, as a matter of fact, they are not. Many people, therefore, fail in their undertakings without being or becoming aware of it. This is especially true in the line of Bible-study.

That student makes no *real* progress, who without guide or teacher works wearily on according to no definite plan, with no fixed methods. He may suppose that time will straighten out everything; that, however confused he may now be, perseverance will enable him to attain the end he has in view. But herein lies his mistake. There is a chance, to be sure, that in his groping about, light may come. But it is the merest chance. He may suppose himself to be making progress; but it is like the progress of the mariner in an unknown sea with no compass in hand, with no stars over head. There is a going up, a going down, and a going around, but no going forward.

That student makes no *real* progress who, not knowing how to choose, performs his work by methods which, though definite, are false and misleading. There is no space here to enumerate the various methods of Bible-study or Bible-interpretation, to which the terms "false" and "misleading" are applicable. It is sufficient to say that *real* progress may not be expected from the spiritualizing method now prevalent, of which C. H. M., Jukes, Pember, and to some extent, Pusey may be taken as representatives; nor from the "hop, step and jump" method which puts side by side texts from every part of Scripture without reference to the logical connection or specific force of each; nor from the "eisegetical" method, which reads *into* texts meanings never dreamed of even by the Holy Spirit. These and other similar methods do not lack, perhaps, in definiteness; yet this very fact makes them all the more dangerous. There may be a kind of progress by these methods, but it is a progress away from, not toward the light.

That student makes no *real* progress who is satisfied with having learned what some one else has said concerning the meaning of a verse, or the scope of a passage; who always *follows*, who is always *leaning upon* another. Such a student crams; he does not digest. His work is done for the moment; not for all time. He examines only results; never the processes leading to the results. The fact is, he does not do *bona fide* work. And yet all the world knows that the knowledge which does not come by genuine work does not stay; it may indeed be said never to have come. This explains the multitude of failures under the present Sunday School system, admirable as it is. Many students, strangely enough, suppose that they need only read the "notes" published in any sheet, or perhaps only the "practical lessons" suggested, and they will in time come to know the Bible. Partly because these "notes," are in so many cases the merest *trash*, and partly because even when most excellent they are not properly studied, the Bible-student who feels that the preparation of his Sunday School lesson is all the Bible-study which he need undertake, in too many cases, makes an out-and-out failure.

For the help of those who, perhaps, have no guide or teacher in their Bible-study, for the benefit of those who have been too greatly influenced by false and misleading methods of study, and as an aid towards independent study on the part of those who have been accustomed to lean too heavily on the crutches furnished, in these days, so freely, it is proposed to publish in successive numbers of the OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT a series of "Studies."

These "Studies" will fall under three heads: (1) Book-studies; (2) Topic-studies; (3) Section- or Verse-studies. The space which they may occupy will necessarily be limited. In their presentation three things will be held in view:

1) The acquisition of *real* Bible-knowledge; that is, not what men have said about the matter under consideration, but what the Bible says of it.

2) The cultivation of a historical spirit; that is, of a habit of studying thoughts in the light of the historical occasion which prompted them, in the light of the development of thought which had taken place at the time of their utterance, and in comparison with similar expressions of thought by other writers living before and after.

3) The attainment of a habit of independent investigation; that is, an ability to seek out for oneself, and to determine for oneself, with the use of all legitimate help, the exact force or meaning of a given passage.

These "Studies" will (1) indicate the work to be done, (2) furnish directions as to how it shall be done, (3) suggest particular lines of investigation, and (4) name authorities to be consulted. They will not contain information upon the subject to be considered, being intended only to show how and where this information may best be obtained. They are prepared for those readers of THE STUDENT who may feel the need of doing such work. They will not presuppose on the part of the student a knowledge of the original languages, although those having this knowledge will find abundant opportunity in the "Studies" for its use.

The first "Study" will be a "Book-study," and will treat of the *First Book of Samuel*.